

From: Sherry Berghefer
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/31/01 6:06pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

In the matter of the Microsoft antitrust settlement, I have to say I disagree with the judgement. For years, I have watched the DOJ and several states (unfortunately, mine is included) waste time and money on a pointless case. Because of Microsoft's success, they are now to be penalized and I question the logic in this endeavor.

I was raised to believe that I lived in a free enterprise system and that regardless of what I did, I should do my best at it. What this case has shown us is that the free enterprise system works as long as everyone agrees to be mediocre. Success is punished, while mediocrity is lauded. What a puzzling concept.

For a time, Netscape was the predominant browser available on the market. Why? Because it was free and, for a while, more robust and user-friendly than Internet Explorer. Along comes a significant improvement in Microsoft's technology and, hold the phone, Netscape gets scared. It realizes that it can't keep up with Microsoft anymore, that it's product is nowhere near as desirable as Microsoft's. Now, instead of demanding more innovation from its programmers, Netscape ran crying to the federal government that it wasn't fair. Other companies decided to join them on the anti-Microsoft bandwagon. After all, if someone is making you look bad, it's easier to push them out of the picture than it is to change yourself.

What I wonder is whether anyone has thought about how Microsoft came to be so dominant? The answer is simple: consumers.

Consumers want something that works the way they want it to at a reasonable price. Microsoft now offers that. I didn't used to like Microsoft's products. They were cumbersome, bloated and were not designed with the user in mind. They learned from their mistakes, though, and have created very robust and easy-to-use programs. I've tried many of the other options out there, and have to say, that I'm very unimpressed. All these other companies have apparently devoted too much of their R&D money to pursuing the big, bad giant. Meanwhile, consumers have been moving away from the so-so software and going to something they know works. Microsoft has implemented a consumer wish list for their products. Other companies just sit back and whine.

I would suggest that perhaps the government should take the time to see how many consumers are really feeling put-out by Microsoft's success. I would wager that the vast majority of consumers feel that this entire pursuit is unwarranted.

Sincerely,
Sherry Berghefer
Nevada, Iowa
slbergh@home.com